GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1681
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2009
TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS IN RURAL AREAS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reviewed the programme to provide telephone connections in rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the achievements made vis-Ã -vis targets fixed during the last three years and the current year, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard to further expand the facilities in the rural areas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT)

(a) to (b): Government has taken various measures to increase the penetration of the telecom facilities in rural areas. As a result, the rural tele-density has become about 19 % as on September, 2009. To spread the reach of telecom connectivity, about 5.6 lakhs villages have been provided with Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the country covering more than 95% of the villages.

Under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), subsidy support to additional 60,000 newly identified villages is being provided to set up VPTs.

State-wise details indicating the no. of VPTs provided during the last three years and during the current financial year are at Annexure.

(c) The steps taken/being taken by the Government to further expand the telephone facilities in the rural areas, inter-alia, are as under:

i. Subsidy support from USOF for setting up of 7440 shareable towers in rural area, out of which about 6500 towers have already been provided.

ii. Subsidy support from USOF for installation of Individual Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1,685 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country, where cost of providing telephones is more than the revenue earned.